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## SONNETS





# SONNETS

WRITTEN AS THE PASTIME OF  
A LONG VACATION

BY <sup>125</sup>  
<sup>622</sup>  
JOHN R. STRONG

12772

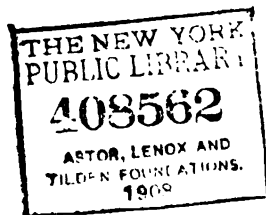
In Term thy numbers flow, dear brook,  
That sat with me through many a tide!  
Thy music stay within my book;  
Thy words were truth as thou didst glide.

CAMBRIDGE

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1906

12



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25

TO  
L. C. S.  
THESE SONNETS  
A RECORD OF MANY YEARS  
ARE  
DEDICATED





## PREFACE

I HAVE thought it worth while to gather together these scattered scraps of verse-writing, that those who came after me and bore some blood-relationship to me might have wherewithal of a personal nature to put upon their shelves, and I have thought it worth while also to add this preface, as it both makes the book more bulky, which it needs, and gives to the Sonnets a certain thread of continuity and interest which they necessarily lack. If I give their slight history and succession in order of their composition, it seems to me that they will be less of an enigma than if they remain mere isolated fragments with the clue to their origin and place in respect to each other gone. Those who have the good fortune to read and understand Shakspeare's Sonnets know how much the interest of those compositions is increased by the slight thread of story, which, though hardly indicated, still binds them together and adds to each, in a measure, the interest of all; and so I think by prefacing these Sonnets with such data as I can remember concerning them, I shall make this a somewhat more readable book, and less of a mere dusty archive.

## PREFACE

I have therefore put the Sonnets, as nearly as possible, in the order of their composition, although, of course, small but difficult corrections of awkward, unfortunate passages belong to a later, often much later, date than the original draught. Attempts at a general recasting have always been abandoned, excepting only the Sonnet to the memory of Hermann Rietzel.

The first Sonnets attempted were the "Allegro" and the "Apple-woman," on the same day in 1882, the latter while I was walking down Broadway to the law office where I was a student, it referring to a woman with some small children, whom I saw selling apples on a corner. It has never been revised, which it much needs. "Finale" was written in a snow-covered woodlot, and in the lowest period of my worldly fortunes, my health, relatives, and friends alike slipping away from me; Peter Gillespie, George, Bi and Mort Rose, Dale and many another, at that time, made life tolerable for me. I must also mention, in this connection, Mrs. Meech and her sister, Miss Pierce, two of the talented sisterhood of Catskill poetesses. "Minuetto" has divided with the Sonnet to H. Rietzel in having a greater share of my attention than any other Sonnet, and has been a difficult proposition, as I have found it. "To Saturn" was mainly written, in despair at the condition of my health, in the autumn of 1884; it was

## PREFACE

commenced at the same time as the Sonnet called "Andante," in the preceding winter, in the Catskills. The Sonnet to Hermann Rietzel was studied from 1882 to 1894. By "Word," in the couplet of this Sonnet, I understand that intellectual essence which is perceived in Man, which is the foundation of his rational being, and which is of a Divine nature, or origin. I should not have meant it so, perhaps, but I have been unable to change the expression. "Impromptu" was written at about the same time as "Finale," a minor subject treated in a major style, as musicians would say, with a rather inharmonious result. It was substantially what I call it, having been written out while walking through the woods along the bank of a stream. The Sonnet upon the Apollo Belvedere forgets the classical origin of the figure; it was written at a single sitting, while looking at a photograph of the statue. "The Lumber-woods," except the first four lines, was written as I was walking alone up one of the Catskill Mountains, with an axe over my shoulder, and the "venom-gilded snake" refers mainly, I think, to myself as burdened with illness. The first quatrain was added a year or so afterwards, at a farm in the same neighbourhood, and it may be interesting to recall that I wrote the first line on a piece of birch-bark to preserve it, not happening to have any paper



## PREFACE

at hand. "Tops" is a technical term, used by lumbermen to describe the unused and wasted top of a tree. "April in the Catskills" was written in April, 1884, and is the last Sonnet of my bachelor days, to which the preceding Sonnets all belong.

The rest of the Sonnets divide themselves into three periods: first, six, "Spring" to "The Matterhorn," written during my wedding tour of a year and a half in Europe, October, 1885, to May, 1887; then, second, four, "Natural Religion" to "Canals of Mars," in 1897, at Speonk, Long Island, together with one, "Shakspere-Baconiana Novissima," in the same year at Cambridge, Mass.; and, third, the remainder, commencing with "The Great Alternative," which are the positively ambitious attempts. "Spring" and "Metempsychosis" were written at Leipzig. The "Coliseum" I rate as the best of my verses. It was liked by my mother. While the style is too youthful, it has much unity. It was written at the Coliseum. "Molly" was written during a single morning, at Speonk, Long Island, after seeing an occurrence which is faithfully described. The "Canals of Mars" came from reading Mr. Percival Lowell's book. "Shakspere-Baconiana Novissima" was written on October 16, 1897, in Cambridge; a slightly altered form was the result of studies in 1899, which also resulted in a terrible attack

## PREFACE

of illness; the italicized arguments are original with myself. I shall add to them the following memorandum. As to "*Hang-hog*," etc., the usual explanation of this is not, as it seems to me, sufficient, when you consider the insulting character of the phrase. That it refers to Sir Nicholas Bacon only fastens it more definitely upon the family of Bacon. The scene in which it occurs is an addition to the early form of the Play. The other italicized argument, based upon the publication of the Sonnets under Shakspeare's name, and apparent general attribution of the Sonnets to him, appears to me irresistible. How is it possible that Lord Bacon should allow the publication of his Sonnets under Shakspeare's name, if he desired that his connection with Shakspeare should remain a secret? Or, suppose the Shakspearean theory about the Sonnets to have arisen from their resemblance to the Plays, or in any manner contrary to Lord Bacon's wish and expectation, and that Lord Bacon did not ascribe his Sonnets to Shakspeare or to any one else, it still remains impossible that Lord Bacon issued personal verse in great quantity and of amazing quality without acknowledging himself as its author to the person for whom it was written. Certainly, therefore, if this Bacon story is true, there must have been a considerable number of people at one time — the nobleman to whom the Son-

## PREFACE

nets were addressed, and his friends — who knew the truth about Lord Bacon's poetical talents as to the Sonnets, and let the ascription to Shakspeare remain, and the secret die with them. They kept the secret because, and only because, Lord Bacon wished it. Lord Bacon must also, from the beginning, have trusted all these people to do this. If you do not accept such a proposition as that, you must assume that a great number of complimentary Sonnets were addressed by Lord Bacon to a young friend, and that the latter went about ascribing them to Shakspeare, or else locked them up and did not allow them to be seen by any one. The precise use they would be to the young man under these circumstances it is exceedingly difficult to see, unless he cared to read poetry about himself in secret. If the Sonnets are to be regarded as impersonal verse, abstract exercises, known to no one but the author, their publication under Shakspeare's name is doubtless compatible with the Baconian theory, but it is simply unreasonable to suppose them so. None of these hypotheses, therefore, being satisfactory, the writing of these Sonnets by Lord Bacon seems less likely than the correctness of the contemporary idea that they were written by Shakspeare.

The remainder of my Sonnets are also printed in the order of their composition; the set called "The

## PREFACE

Great Alternative" is the first poetry that I attempted to write of malice aforethought, as it were, or with deliberate intention to essay the higher flights of the penman, all my previous efforts having been rather for amusement than ambition. I do not know that I worked any harder over the one kind than the other, though I am not sure but that it is more difficult to write poetry to order than to inclination. "The Great Alternative" was intended originally to consist of eight Sonnets instead of five, but the project was broken off by ill health and then pushed aside by circumstances. Its meaning has not therefore been, perhaps, made quite clear, and I will depart so far from the usual rule as to explain that the point which the Sonnets were intended to illustrate was this: that the course of Nature must be accepted as wholly Providential or as not at all so, that there is no middle course, and that either view is to be accepted with all of its consequences. This argument has appeared to me to be the strongest that can be made, apart from Revelation, in favor of Theism, and is one to which I have been led by my own thought, however many times, doubtless, it has been arrived at before. These were written in Florida, in the spring of 1902. "Il Pensiero," or "Pensieroso" (as I have rather too fancifully called the Sonnet after the statue at Florence, — "Rally" was written after the compan-

## PREFACE

ion statue), was written in four hours, in one morning. The line,

'Midst motes and atoms that each single fly,

was suggested by a reflection of Franz Schubert's, in his letters, on the solipsism, or essential solitude, of some, or all, human beings. The difference of these two Sonnets in form is, I think, an error of mine. In the autumn of 1902, at my country-place in the Catskills, Faunside, I wrote the " Fireside " set. They were written with comparative ease, in a month approximately ; the second, indeed, was written while sitting during an October morning with my wife in the woods, overlooking the stream. The last set, " The Moon-dweller," was written in Florida during the winter of 1903-4 ; the " Flying Proa " was written in a single evening during that period, and is my last Sonnet, except some of the latter part of the Sonnet called " Life," and the as yet unstudied " Meadow-Elegy." The phrase " Large lengths of miles," in the " Flying Proa," occurs in one of Shakspere's Sonnets, which I did not remember at the time when I wrote it. The line,

So, Hermann, our love, thou art not dead,

was suggested by a line which I read in a magazine

## PREFACE

some years ago, a translation, I believe, of a Greek original,

“ Harmodius, our darling, thou ’rt not dead,  
Thou livest in the isles of the blest, ’t is said.”

These are the only cases, conscious or unconscious, as far as I know, of plagiarism in my writings.

The Unfinished Verses have been added partly to make the book larger. Possibly, if the Sonnets are found interesting by any one of my son, niece, nephews, or cousins, the reader may care to see some of the unfinished or discarded draughts. As a general rule, I do not approve of this plan, but where the output is so small, and the interest personal and private, there is no harm in including more of the MSS.

I should have liked to have made these notes upon the Sonnets more interesting, but, really, there is little to say beyond mentioning the time and place or manner of their origin, except interminable accounts of how the lines were suggested, or selected from varied forms, or the more subtle question of the choice of ideas, — discussions which, in their nature, are very extensive, and, to persons of taste, quite unnecessary. A book of that sort might be made, but it would be a book rather than a preface. I should not close this preface without acknowledging the debt that I am

## PREFACE

under to my brother Templeton, whose warm interest in these compositions and whose example in another Art have been a constant encouragement and stimulus to me.

And now, laying down my pen, I am inclined to sing my *Laus Deo*; if any of my young relatives should feel inclined to take up this difficult, but ennobling and amusing subject, I hope that they may find herein something to build upon.

## MEMOIR OF HERMANN RIETZEL

I SHALL do well, perhaps, to add to this preface a short account of Hermann Rietzel, as a justification for the praise which I have given him, whose life was the most perfect, as his character was the most perfect, that I have ever known personally. He was the youngest son of Frederick and Adine Rietzel, born January 24, 1863, in New York city, and died by drowning in a lake known variously as Lake Spofford, or Lake Chesterfield, in New Hampshire, May 26, 1882, aged nineteen. Frederick Rietzel, his father, was a distinguished flute-player, and was, for a number of years, the vice-president and active head of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, then the principal orchestra

## PREFACE

in America. Hermann's musical ability commenced with his ability to climb on the piano-stool; this has been said of other musicians, of whom he was, in this matter, a repetition. I knew him from his boyhood as a boy of surprising talent; he became a composer, and not only a concert pianist, but more or less expert upon the orchestral instruments generally. His first public appearance was at a festival for children, held in New York in December, 1874. The festival included matinee performances at the Stadt Theatre of a Märchen-Oper called "Schneewittchen," words by Goerner, music by an elder brother of Hermann's, Mr. John C. Rietzel, who was also Concertmeister. The cast and chorus were all children, and the orchestra of grown-up musicians was conducted successfully by Hermann, then nearly twelve years old, under his brother's eye. In the following December this festival was repeated, the Märchen chosen being Dornröschen. The programme reads: "Musik von dem 12 jährigen Kapellmeister Hermann Rietzel." At this period also, at a costume ball at the Academy of Music, a brilliant and fashionable event, arranged, I believe, by the late Mr. Richard Grant White, Hermann appeared in the costume of Mozart and played a solo on the pianoforte. He also took part in a polonaise and in a minuet, the dancers in these sets all being children. It was at about



## PREFACE

this period that I first saw him at a private orchestral concert at the house of the late Mr. Edmund H. Schermerhorn, where he was pointed out in the distinguished assemblage as the talented son of the conductor; he was a little fellow then, in short trousers, his feet not reaching to the floor as he sat poring over an orchestral score in his lap. He sailed for Europe on July 5, 1877, to complete his musical education. A farewell concert was given for him at Steinway Hall, in New York, in the April before his departure. The orchestra was led by the late Dr. Leopold Damrosch, Mme. Pappenheim and Mr. Adolph Sohst sang, and Mr. Hermann Brandt, violinist, and Mr. Frederick Bergner, violoncellist, played solos on their respective instruments. Hermann played Chopin's E moll Concerto. Mrs. William Astor, Mrs. William C. Schermerhorn, Mrs. George T. Strong, Mrs. George Kemp, and Mrs. R. Ogden Doremus appeared on the programme as patronesses.

Two of his successes as a pianist will show the rapidity of his rise during his youth. Mr. Rafael Joseffy was advertised to play Beethoven's Fourth Pianoforte Concerto, G major, Op. 58, on January 24, 1880, at a Philharmonic concert. Some slight injury to one of his hands, less than a week before that date, made his appearance impossible. Then Hermann was asked

## PREFACE

by the Philharmonic directors, on January 20, if he would play the Concerto. He had never made any particular study of it. The public rehearsal was to come on January 23. He accepted, and played with entire success technically, and such artistic success as could be expected from one so young with so mature a work before him. This concert took place upon his seventeenth birthday. At a Saturday afternoon recital at Chickering Hall in the fall of the same year, Mr. Joseffy and Hermann Rietzel played a set of variations by Saint-Saëns for two pianos, on a theme of Beethoven's. Mr. Joseffy allowed Hermann to play the first piano part, and upon Mr. Joseffy's private pianoforte. This performance so pleased Mr. Joseffy that it was repeated on March 23, 1881, at a concert given in aid of a charity at the residence of Mr. Henry K. McHarg, in New York city.

In respect to composition, Hermann kept his composing within his memory for improvement, putting nothing on paper, thinking himself still too young; it perished with him, except one song, "Der Schäfer," written to be sent home to his sister Amalie when he was fifteen years old and a student in Stuttgart, another song, "I saw thee weep," scored but laid aside as not satisfactory to him, and some bars of a pianoforte concerto. As the song "Der Schäfer" is the most sub-

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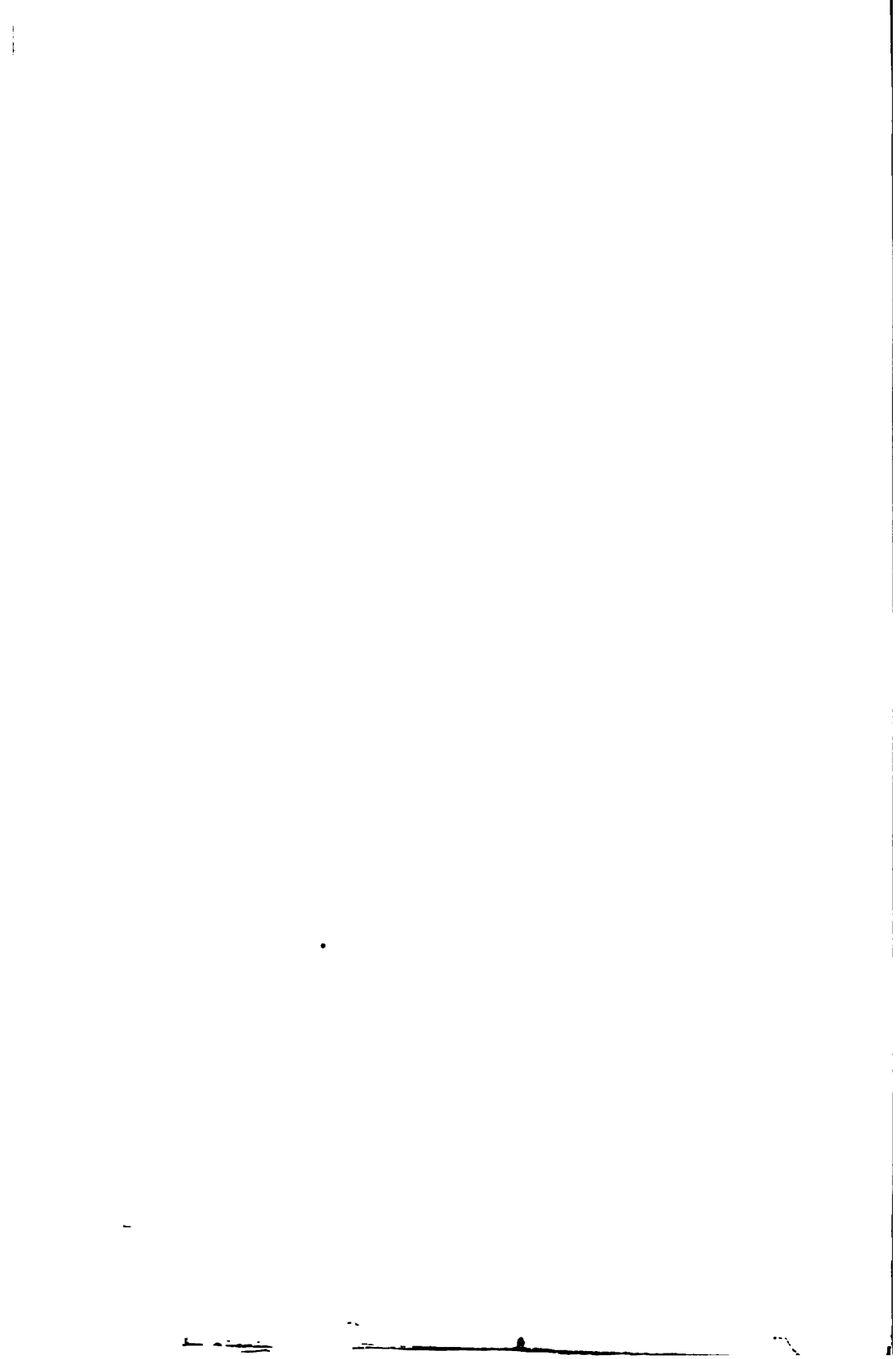
stantial proof of his abilities at an early age, and of what I have said of them, I have requested his family to permit its publication.

He was a phenomenal reader of music at sight, not only upon the piano, but also upon other instruments less familiar to him. I remember personally his taking part with two violoncellists in a trio for three violoncellos by Battanchon, reading at sight the difficult first 'cello part, written in three clefs, and playing it upon the viola, and without any apparent hesitation. Such performances may be common to great musicians, but I confess to have known no other who could do it. Mr. Frederick Bergner, the first great 'cellist in America, when giving his annual concert of chamber music in New York city, had Hermann at the piano when the boy's feet would scarcely reach the pedals. I remember Mr. Bergner's mentioning that he felt an especial confidence when Hermann sat at the piano. I was told by Hermann's family a year or two after my first seeing him, that he had learned the flute secretly, to surprise his father, for whom he afterwards played occasionally as substitute in the theatre.

Physically delicate as a child, he developed into a young man of flawless constitution, broad-shouldered, and tall above the average. His character was of a singular manliness; every man liked him; he had am-

## PREFACE

bition without selfishness, industry and a desire for amusement, and a temper that seemed never ruffled. He was clever at whatever he undertook. When he died so suddenly, it seemed to his world like a social convulsion. Mr. Joseffy withdrew one of his compositions, which was on the eve of publication, and re-issued it dedicated to the memory of Hermann Rietzel; Mr. Theodore Thomas had considered Hermann likely to be his successor.



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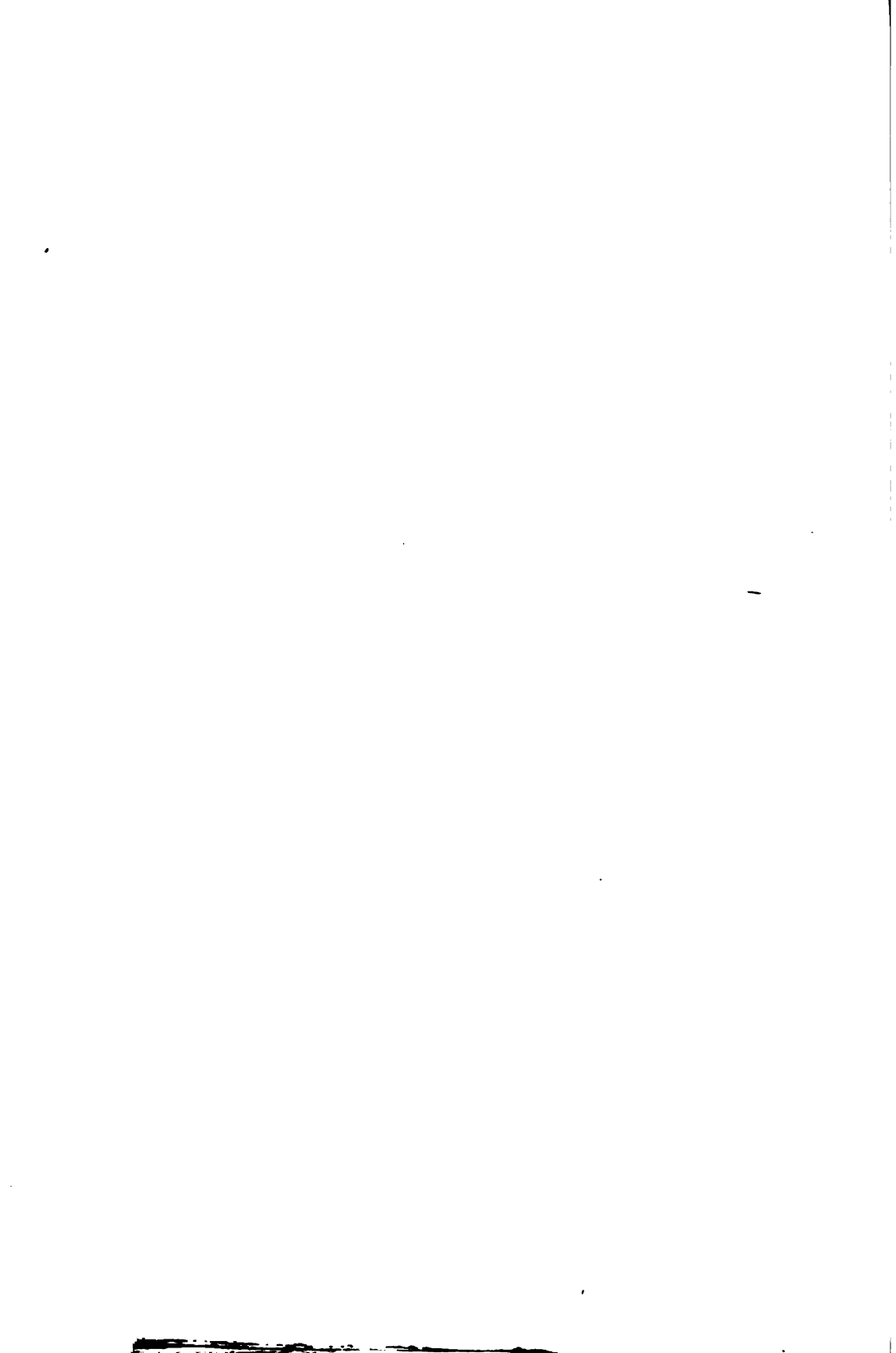
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## **SONNETS**



# SINFONIA

## I

### ALLEGRO

As, in the morning's light, the trees' first choirs  
Wake at the Sun's approach ; his radiant face,  
Looking among the boughs, finds no deniers,  
And breezes move each tuneful resting place ;  
Then do his coursers turn toward the sky,  
While, as they stamp the Heavenly way, all folks  
Look upward, each with bright, inquiring eye,  
To see his face, and, 'midst the pines and oaks,  
The winds, his messengers, such glad tidings bring  
Of coming joys that their dull wood doth sing ;  
So thou, my love, on my youth's dawn arising,  
Didst gaze on me ; since then, in stubborn pining,  
I long to see thy face, which thou dost hide,  
For 't is but night to be by thee denied.

II

ANDANTE

As, in the light of pale Cytherea's Moon,  
The wayfarer toils upon the lonely steep,  
And thinketh oft of what was ne'er his own,  
And turneth heavily where he would weep,  
So, in the light of mine own soul, within,  
I sigh the days when I have loved in vain,  
And o'er the path that leadeth this to win  
I toil with steps that lief would toil again.  
And when the Moon from her high place hath  
    flown,  
And night pervadeth all, serene and still,  
He husheth yet his ever-rising moan,  
So from the starry spheres my need I fill.  
    For they are they who smile, who comfort,  
    move,  
As if they had some thought for us above.

### III

#### MINUETTO

So is it not, thou perfect maid, thy worth  
To be compared with aught of land or sea,  
For they of choice-impressèd, half-fair Earth,  
Unequal, bend in perfect truth to thee.  
The shining light of Heaven, raging clouds  
Do check in action ; even gentle air,  
A devastating whirlwind, meadows shrouds,  
Whose labour falls, a moment earlier fair.  
But thou, a form of Nature and of Mind,  
Knowest that thou for mastering Time must be,  
So thy perfection, to th' imperfect kind,  
Shows like a diamond for the world to see.  
Lo! he, who would this diamond bear away,  
Let him o'er rivals be, else single stay.

#### IV

#### FINALE

Now, as late-blushing day the tree-top spires  
Gilds with departing gold ; the spreading leaves  
Stand all mute doubters, and the chanting choirs  
Now mute, save one that carols as he grieves ;  
As, on a setting path, the rolling Sun  
Hath journeyed, golden, dusty, to his end,  
Whom now the forest seeth where he's done —  
Then sunset comes, and night, and stars amend ;  
They look like life above where night doth  
    dwell,  
Where they are all whom we have loved so well ;  
So do thy words yet in my memory cling ;  
Thy acts — though naught but pain do such  
    words bring ;  
So thy fair look yet cometh as a dream,  
As once the Moon did to Endymion seem.

## TO SATURN

O Saturn, when I see thy light afar  
I grope how with such light this world agrees,  
Or what it is that makes thy wonder, star,  
Where thou residest o'er our waving trees.  
Who diggeth with his hands the flinty heart  
Of this too obdurate mother findeth less,  
At last, than graves are, but thy unmarred chart  
Showeth like hope, though placed in hopelessness.

As do men's hopes deflect and aye heart's bloom  
Declines, so doth thy beauty quiver there.  
Thee saveth constancy ; such is our doom,  
Half-based on sorrow ; so, too, thou dost wear.

Thy posting beam doth give this thought a  
place ;

Whatever be the truth, it has that grace.



## IN MEMORIAM

H. R.

(Ob. May, 1882)

As Phaeton pressed toward the Sun, to take  
His sky-ascending steeds, that, blessing us,  
Bring forth the glorious light where dawn doth  
break,

To chase away night black and troublous,  
So, Hermann, here, thy adyt tenebrous  
In fields celestial, after that sad lake,  
Clear Spofford's Lake, was after thou didst make  
Attempt at what on Earth is glorious.  
Here can be naught exceeds thy passing thus,  
Save perilous days; then let the major stake  
Be granted thine, as thou, laborious,  
Didst lift us with thy tones from conflict's ache.  
Meet we again! in Nature nebulous  
Word limits not, nor quill, nor calamus.

## LINES UPON MUSIC OF H. RIETZEL'S

(May, 1883)

This May, this music, alike do time amend;  
This music, in whose leaves still comes my  
friend,  
This May, at whose sweet footsteps hope doth  
attend.  
Let all this May rejoice in Hermann's power,  
And thou, thy voice let join in Summer's choir;  
All hushed to hear thy singing through an hour.

## IMPROMPTU

Yield none assent, ye lovely maids, that worth  
Is cheapened, or hath less than first in price ;  
The storms which cloud the melancholy Earth  
Are not Love's Sun that seeth Paradise.  
For where, in glistering Heaven, o'er travail,  
Sweet Juno giveth share of weal and woe,  
The Hours that do fly on brightest sail  
Are those that bearing truth to lovers go.  
So trust ye not to such as steal away  
And bring deceit to them that love do ask ;  
Let such with idler trifles their time play  
And never think for Love's best, highest, task.  
For so it is with us that thus do see,  
We take the place of Love, yet not Love's be.

TO A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE APOLLO  
BELVEDERE

Apollo Belvedere, thy wonder makes  
A slave of unbound night, that twilight's gold  
Hath scattered. Paused, but after judgment,  
bold,

Now free, thy arrow sped, thy anger breaks  
In smiles more sweet than dawn when night is  
fled.

Dread mystery of darkness! God of light,  
Canst thou not stop defeat? Thy glance so  
bright

Marks not the snake uprear his envious head.  
A serpent close as close men's faults all be,  
Of storied sculptures tell and verses sing,  
Yet, as thy shadows darkness bring to me,  
I marvel not the ages naught such bring.  
Thy risen sister's light now comes to thee;  
Thou standest in thy beauty answering.

## THE LUMBER-WOODS

Among our musical tops the breezes lie down,  
About our golden arms they hourly play ;  
Who liveth to our beauty owns our sky-crown,  
His mind attains that grandeur every day.  
Like venom-gilded snake the woodman glideth,  
For littlest gold 'gainst forest kings there sent,  
And with his steel his will he so provideth  
That, as he grows, is Nature's beauty spent.  
Oft jocund is his camp, and strong his hand,  
Yet as a fell disease his progress marreth ;  
Albeit his habitations grace the land,  
Yet harmfully his hand the greenwood scarreth.  
    Away, thou careless harvester ! Thy laws  
    Are worse, in forest right, than serpent's jaws.

## APRIL IN THE CATSKILLS

Haste, glorious Spring! of Heaven the earliest  
born,  
For in such time did first the plants put forth  
Their green embracements. Then, on ragged  
Earth,  
Sprang up the tree-trunks; now, in footsteps  
worn,  
Thou comest in thy straight-laced majesty  
To take thy kingdom. Thus my fortunes, too,  
Revive as I could ask, nor should I rue  
That this remakes what else bleak poverty  
Had made a ruin. Thus do ever joys  
Repair themselves by new; through bluest skies  
Winter's gray pallor rages; this annoys,  
But turns to brighter days, to Man's surprise.  
Come forth into the fields! The girls and boys  
Dance there a round; come, follow him who  
tries.

## SPRING

Lo, now the oxen come in furrowed fields,  
The blackbird sings, and calls his perching mate,  
The winds are still, where any hillock shields,  
And Spring hath now her gifts to arbitrate.  
The mountains cast off Winter ; they 're for  
Man,

And forward as his allies ; on their sides  
Th' esquiring zephyrs hasten with their plan  
Of vaulting heraldry and green Summer's prides.  
" Thus hath it ever been," the farmer says,  
And whistles to his team right joyfully ;  
The forests echo thousand thousand ways,  
While babbling streamlets chatter what 's to be.

None are like thee, O Spring ! th' abundant  
lays

Of birds innumerable do adorn thy days.

## METEMPSYCHOSIS

Sing, verses wild, unto the Conqueror, Man !  
He, with bare feet, the hard Earth pressèd so  
That he stood upright ; tender, too, began,  
That he above the unreasoning herd might show.  
Great citadels, and Learning's domes that soar  
O'er Earth, he reared, yet threw them all behind,  
Impatient so, and, bare as e'er before,  
Entered the realm of the individual mind.  
Will he not conquer too ? O, beckoning lights,  
That in that darkness live as that could be,  
Can ever be made his your lessoning nights,  
Or ever come but dreams to Man from ye ?  
    Here, on the plains where did wild horses  
        range,  
His cities dwell, awaiting some great change.



## THE COLISEUM

The Coliseum ! As the starry night  
Above looks down with looks strange and severe,  
The moon invading with low, cloud-barred  
light,  
I glide about in eyelet arch and pier.  
How many, O how many crowded throngs  
Have been where now is moonbeams' fancy's  
home !  
What glorious men, what talk of rights and  
wrongs,  
The pomp of Emperors, and the pride of Rome !  
Within thy frame the shadowy mourners go,  
The shapes that lie within thee through the  
day ;  
Within thy urn a voice cries out to know  
If century-weighted age aught can allay.  
Here yet remaineth still thy archèd wall,  
Though but for ruin or for sudden fall.

## VENICE

Venice, thou gemmèd island, be new found,  
As once thou wert ; the Eastern, golden seas  
Dowered thee thy carved arches, as the breeze  
Echoed thy victory down to Saracen ground.  
Here flung away, once wedded, saddest mound,  
Thy thronged Rialto, captives on their knees,  
And lion-bird, are told of but by these,  
A sunset-memory of the renowned.  
So, o'er the flood, the fixed, uncertain eye  
Sees domes of cloud and towers of sunset's gold,  
A palaced, painted city in the sky,  
Where rolling clouds, o'er furthest Ocean rolled,  
Fleck dark the sea. The present is to sigh ;  
What still remains scarce breathes, a tale nigh  
told

## THE MATTERHORN

The Matterhorn! It has not seen its like  
In all the Alps, since first the Alps were known.  
It has within itself the things which strike  
The imagination, for it is alone.

When first I saw its shape I stooped my knee,  
And said, "Such is the form that heroes make;  
There is no other in the world like thee,  
Thou glorious shape, to so the world forsake!"  
But when the moonlight falls on thee apace,  
And in thy heights a shadowy thought thou art,  
The eye that seeth thee in wondrous place  
Doth think that stone may have a spirit's part.

There is no mountain shape, the Alp-lands  
know,  
As thine to see, alone above the snow.

## THE MATTERHORN

The Matterhorn : when I do end my days  
May I within thy turning shadow lay,  
That, after work, when these sad eyes do glaze,  
Upon thy throne may rest my lifeless clay.  
Thus at thy feet may I my cares assuage,  
My cares, my life, for such my cares sure are,  
To wait while slide the same way age on age  
As avalanches slide from grey rocks far.  
Now ever, while is time, my thoughts do climb  
To where that giddy pinnacle fronts the sky ;  
There can I wander sadly in my prime ;  
So, when is time, that Lord of graves to buy.  
    So there my steps may find their final end ;  
    So, in that end, to find what all attend.

## NATURAL RELIGION

Poling my skiff at dusk along the shore  
At Speonk, the village church-bell sounded sweet  
And clear across its distance. Now, this beat  
Of silence-calling music, if not more,  
Is less than useful. Or it opes the door  
To dreams æonian, dreams when friends shall  
meet,

Dreams that allow for time its methods fleet,  
Or better might a dragon's howl here roar.  
Fantastic mock inviting, Babel bell,  
What a sad group thy nave will hold in vain  
If thou 'rt not true! Contented, choose to dwell  
In trust, admitting doubt, and call profane  
Man's fall from trust. Is Nature's apex hell,  
A Man self-cursed, this tone all leger-de-main?

## "MOLLY"

The cat has caught a mouse, and, having fed,  
Plays with it, and this is not for feed.  
Oft, in her chase, she idly let him speed  
Out of her soft, white paws, but, ere he sped,  
Nabbed him ; he 'scaped, (she let him) six times  
in dread,  
In a high bush called "Bridal Wreath;" in  
need  
Twice a high stalk he climbed ; with dexterous  
heed  
She knocked him down ; at last, when gasping  
dead,  
She tossed and played with him, at moment's  
pause  
Sitting beside him like a Sphinx. I deem  
This act a microscopic one, whose laws  
Seize like a horror on my nerves, which teem  
From top to toe, a passing shadow cause  
To fly o'er the Sun —this is more than a dream.

## THE CANALS OF MARS

Companion in our state of woe, unknown  
In our earthly pilgrimage aright,  
Hast thou suffered too, within thy night,  
And, in the ashes, hoped for peace, alone?  
Is 't true, is 't true that all th' o'erflowing groan  
Of martyred earth, the triumphing despite,  
The countless tears, the love, the ceaseless fight,  
Are mere rehearsals on our stage of stone?  
What though it be so? Yet the mind doth bear  
More courage for his new perplexity,  
Taking new strength as touching on new care,  
And the light dreams of worldly infancy,  
Chaldæan secrets, mariner's news, all fare  
To primal, all-engrossing mystery.

## SHAKSPERE-BACONIANA NOVISSIMA

(*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act IV, Sc. 1)

*"Hang-hog is Latin for Bacon,"* — Good Dame,  
Thou layedst an opinion 'fore the Court;  
Clear Shakspere's; like for Essex that retort,  
For once drawn out to judge a living name.  
As if to rival Punch's merry aim,  
Baconians have their stage; Lincoln's sport,  
Giotto, Beethoven, all great report,  
All can spring up, though humble, save Will's  
fame.

The Books say "No!" Bacon? *How could he  
call*

*His Sonnets, written to his nearest friends,*  
*Shakspere's?* And, then, the Master's Plays have  
all

The strength Lord Bacon in his Psalms intends.  
Of all the follies that invade the brain,  
This has the least to justify its reign.



# THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE

## I

### PRELUDE

The great alternative: Can Nature school  
Her atoms to that cursed, birth-hating dust  
Of Godless Man, or not? Can she adjust  
Man from Chaos' limit, tearful fool,  
Created to her fundamental rule  
Opposed, still more, we say, a thing august,  
When rising to his height, and, as we trust,  
Above both him and her, not her mere tool?  
No simple earth made Man; not Sirius' height  
E'er shone with brightness like his deeds. We  
know

There is no middle term; one has been right.  
So Man repeats, with age-recurring woe,  
The greatest of the human reason's flight:  
"THAT is, without which Man would not be  
so."

II

IL PENSIERO

San Lorenzo

Seated alone, and ever to be so,  
'Midst motes and atoms that each single fly,  
I watch the day approach when I may die,  
When, only through that, I'll arrive to know.  
The days roll 'round, their objects rise and grow,  
The stars begin their courses, gild the sky,  
Shed lustre here on what goes wandering by,  
And none know whither, why, each one can  
go.

In such eternal meditation might  
Earth's worms outwatch the years, unanswered  
still;

Eternity is no part of such sight.  
The watcher sees the years their times fulfill,  
A million pass as in a single night,  
And knows not for his thought what he should  
will.

### III

#### RALLY

San Lorenzo

No, there is more within this inch of Time ;  
A principle, a something, scarce seen, holds,  
Controls the shipwrecks, met in every clime,  
That sees us even as the mountain-folds.  
The Sun arises, renovating the world ;  
Man's toil begins, as, darting from the hive,  
The insect squares his quivering oars, pearled,  
And merry larks sing where the plough-men  
    strive.  
Who can o'er-praise this gracious, temperate  
    scene  
Of shadowy Earth ? So should it truly be  
For us, its passengers ; its mantle green  
And white embraces more than we can see.  
    No, Nature is unequal to the plan,  
    Contradictory of herself in Man.

IV

QUESTION

And yet, what's in ourselves of utter rout  
Of Fancy's shaping? Every mind of thought  
Deems as a treasure all that Good has taught,  
Distressèd by the coastless chart of doubt,  
Convinced by neither, for the snaky knout  
Hangs over fortunes, and there lives not aught  
But quarrels for subsistence; ill lives, wrought  
Into the strife of life, no life without.  
For this present, the mind on tosses, driven  
Through hopes and fears, a sea at hopeless war,  
A virtue seeming like a rescue stolen.  
What is the future, when the law, our star,  
Shines not to Eternity and Heaven,  
Alike inconceivable, or we mar.

## THE ROSE

Existence is delight unto the Rose,  
That, save in dying, knows not aught of death;  
But Man looks after, all his hours knows  
Of millioned accident and flight of breath.  
When, then, did Nature to this knowledge rise,  
So forced the clay? How does she leap the  
span

That bounds the perfect crystal of the wise,  
Faith, Hope, and Charity, respect for Man  
And Nature, awe found, gentleness displayed,  
Truth ever sought, its seeker made a seer?  
The common grasses unrespected fade,  
But to a flower Heaven should drop a tear  
For killing aught so pretty, but we aid;  
We are the mourners, paying this debt clear.

VI

L'ENVOI

Farewell, farewell, forever go,  
My playground, loved e'en deep in snow,  
With sunny days, and Ocean proud,  
And mountains tossed, and minds endowed,  
And rough-hewed crowd, and Moon and stars,  
And stony ground, and force that wars!  
Through all a beauty like divine,  
In grain of sand and tasseled pine,  
But what it is, how beauty comes,  
Tells not at all, and asking dumbs.  
So, too, a whisper seems divine,  
Like sea-shell's, from the Ocean's mine,  
But all will go, e'en this; I turn,  
Be dark, be light, sure gain to earn;  
I, not alone self-conscious, go  
To THAT whose function is to know.

## THE FIRESIDE

### I

#### FIRELIGHT

The firelight : it is more sweet than sad  
To look into its depths of crystal flame,  
Its endless lights and shades to fathom, glad,  
Its comforting to feel remain the same.  
What joy was in the tree of yesterday,  
Or it which centuries has lain in coal,  
To raise among the woods his tree-top gay  
From place in vale, or on ambitious knoll !  
And now it crumbles slowly in its course,  
In tranquil loss of flake, and dust, and all ;  
So our strange shape and functions lose their  
force,  
With whate'er fire the mind its own can call.  
But whatsoe'er it be that may befall,  
I know a single movement governs all.

II

TREE'S TRIAL

But O, the toils and visions of lament  
That that embossèd bulk bore in the blast !  
What howling winds withheld, in darkness blent,  
What strains, what tremors, facing each shock  
cast !

And, too, the longing for fair days of peace,  
And light, and joy, in vales of rest eterne,  
And all the dumb, dim hopes of branched in-  
crease,

Which hopes and longing in one fire do burn !  
What argument is this for leaping Care,  
Where character resides, when every floss  
And silken tendril Nature shewed to dare  
Is buried deep, or suffers fiery loss ?

O, happy was thy head, in days of youth,  
In what thou hadst, though it be naught, in  
sooth !



### III

#### TREE'S RELIGION

The tree that glassed itself into the pool,  
Its delicate, feathery arms saw in the bowl,  
If such it had ; not human was its school,  
Though in its attitude it might teach a soul.  
Intruded in the depths of mirrored world  
It saw its image, baseless as a dream.  
Perhaps it knew itself; its wealth unfurled  
Seemed like a labor in the peaceful stream,  
And, too, a likeness pure. Here, it is strange,  
Two such ideas co-mix ; here, too, it wist  
That counterpart serene that, without change  
Or toil, suggests a better world we list.  
If such insight had trees, so long ago,  
Grasp that a mystery lies in all we know.

IV

FIREPLACE

The fire burns up brightly as I think,  
And Elsie comes in now and sits with me,  
My wife of many years, now on the brink  
Of vales descending ; seld do we agree.  
“ Your ideas are poetic, Mr. Strong,  
But mine are plainer prose.” Then’d archly  
say :  
“ Your tree outgazes some men I’ve known  
long.”  
“ It’s satisfied to do so, all it may,”  
Half dryly I reply, not more ; I fear  
The light of that clear eye. “ Let me alone,  
To write as judgment flickers.” Then appear  
Young thoughts, young hopes, the fireside circle  
grown.  
And, half-reluctant, I bring in the wood  
That once has known so much of bad and  
good.

## THE FLYING PROA

*Biscayne Bay*

'Mid passing waves glides on my boat's keen  
keel,

Responsive to my hand, as blithely free  
As swallow o'er her meadows ; all the fee  
Of the wide plains is mine, so, light to feel  
Minutest alterations in the breeze to heel  
The slight mast and its kite-shaped sail, we flee  
Large lengths of miles upon the silver sea,  
Gaining in Ocean all reward for zeal.

The slender 'midships mast a lateen sail,  
With delicate cordage, holds, and balance o'er  
This nautilus its air-float can avail.

For novelty prayed, the cry along the shore,  
Neptune the Flying Proa gave, so hail  
The prettiest racer, thank the Commodore !

## THE MOON-DWELLER

### I

#### DAY TO NIGHT

At midnight on the Moon the dweller might  
Have Earth at zenith, a vast, white-touched ball,  
A sea like turquoise, continents green or white,  
Incessantly revolving, light on all.

The Sun appears along the airless void  
As darkness edges Earth, toward which Earth  
turns ;

The Sun arises, and the dark, deployed,  
Creeps on its course till Night Earth's conquest  
earns.

Darkness has Earth, yet girt about with light,  
A wreath, of rainbow colours we may think,  
The Sunflower of the Heavens, nameless sight,  
That puzzles thought, leads knowledge past its  
brink.

O Earth, thou art a scene full wild for me ;  
Inexorable home, awe is in thee !

## NIGHT TO DAY

The Sun the zenith passes by, to show  
His journey to the West; then there's a light;  
Aurora rises on Earth's Sunward bow  
And day there follows, slowly gaining height.  
Full noon then follows, bright to him who sits  
In instant darkness, when the Sun has set,  
As o'er the magic brightness cloud-land flits  
Like sails angelic in some triumph met.  
Like hermits o'er the slowly moving globe,  
Like wayfarers with candles through the night,  
They move, serene in vastness, bright of robe,  
The life in an inexplicable sight.

The sphere which, black, is as a land of  
dreams,

When light as much a singular jewel seems.

### III

#### MECHANICS

The circle told makes one long lunar day,  
In voiceless solitude, relieved, in part,  
By wonders noted, as, the waving way  
The Moon avoids eclipses on her chart ;  
The Earth's oblique poise, eccentric boon,  
That makes the Sun go North and South, and so  
Gives to the seasons difference, and the Moon  
Runs high in Winter when the Sun is low ;  
The evening Harvest-Moon ; and still simple,  
Although in detail complex, laws allot  
Each motion, and, no builder visible,  
None can say how it could be or not.

Time moves not for motions such as these,  
In endless space inset in boundaries.

IV

LIFE

Upon the Earth, the noblest work of all  
Appears in Man and Woman, peace-browed  
pair,  
Benign their faces as beyond befall,  
Reared from childish state in gardens fair.  
Where paths through waving trees, with flowers  
bedight,  
Are fair, as those best know who most can see,  
There lives my love, beneath the concave light;  
Inscrutable life, in all a mystery!  
Therefore the sphere seems not mere matter  
quite,  
But almost spiritual harmony,  
Transmuting nature into moral height,  
Mother of minds, Instructress, boundary.  
The outcome is to come that none shall spare,  
All perhaps strangely led and full of care.

## **UNFINISHED VERSES**





## FIRST LINE

(Unfinished line, without a verb, written in 1868 when I was a Freshman in College. As I had no idea how to go on, the composition rested there.)

As the golden Moon

## FIRST COMPOSITION

1877

At Summer's end, in Autumn's day, 't is time,  
Yet time to say at least a parting word,  
Farewell!  
To her, on whom fair Nature, in her prime,  
All graces lavished, these verses are inscribed,  
To Miss D——l.

## ON THE HIGH SEAS

(Lines written in 1877, and sent to a lady, upon a photograph of a ship under full sail.)

I

Upon capricious seas, 'midst airy tempests,  
Through storm and calm, an adventurous bark doth  
sail.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

### II

Her timbers slight, ah, how, o'er furious surges,  
Can she, save Neptune captivate, prevail?

### III

Avert thy lightnings from her, spare her, Heaven!  
Avert thy fury, and make less each gale!

### IV

Under her joyous prow, the dark-green billows  
Leap forward to her land-locked harbor's pale.

## THE DYING SWAN

1879

Hark, what a sound! the wind, a mighty wave,  
Sweeps through the forest, and the trees all bow,  
And bend before it; yet some leaves do fall,  
And fly before it, flung from their torn branches,  
Eddying to the ground. The mountain sides  
Their forests toward the sky do mightily  
Rear to leafy rank and station. Far o'erhead,  
On grey, wind-visited cliffs they rest enthroned,  
Wind's seed, as princes ruling far and wide.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

Ceasing at the edge, the clustering trees  
Entwine it, as about a brow divine,  
The earliest lighted by the long rays of dawn  
Through countless ages.  
Among the waving boughs new colors shine,  
Autumn's wild heraldry ; her ominous hand  
First paints among the trees, with glorious hues,  
Gold, scarlet, crimson, purple, pink, and red,  
A visionary city, palaces, spires, domes,  
Rising in crowded splendor. So, a dream of wonder  
Among the hardy oaks and maples might itself  
Fancifully weave ; soon chilling winds  
Will scatter it in dust. But why, O, why,  
Thou rushing wind, dost thou so fearfully  
Moan o'er every plain, o'er hill and dale,  
Tempestuously ? Art thou some sightless fiend,  
That, myriad-armed, dost all the listening Earth  
So madly havoc ? Or, in stifled words,  
Thou universal breath, proclaim'st that thou  
Shalt fade away ?  
Fays all musical, tell, come tell.

### *Answer*

All 's well.  
Rippled, glittering, long and blue,  
Heaven-mirroring, and wind-chased,

## UNFINISHED VERSES

Ever-altering, flows a stream,  
Music-murmuring, whereon sits,  
Splendidly plumaged, a swan.

It flows in changing scenes, it moves, at first,  
In meadows green, with daisies scattered o'er,  
And violets blue, but shy, like young eyes.  
Next, cloud-watching plains, where wild fowl flock.

Tall, inclined on the brink, the pure  
Lilies, maidenly, slender, white,  
Are his sentinels, and, further back,  
Above, blow dark pink the wild roses,  
Thick, where the tide lingers along the shore.

His milestones float, they are water lilies,  
Of rare sweet odor, moored to shore.

His mighty wings are at rest, and so  
His dark, sweet eye is anxiously moving ;  
A wondrous reflection attends him solemnly.  
Why bows his royal head, why plucks  
He at his breast so wildly, and tears  
His feathers, what striveth he to remove,  
What is that black feather? It is  
On a shaft well brightened with crimson drops

## UNFINISHED VERSES

Where flew the merciless hunter's bolt  
Home to his vitals.

. . . . .

## THE APPLEWOMAN

1882

An apple peddler, sitting by her stand,  
Read much of prouder fair that lived in pride,  
Her head bowed down upon her roughened hand,  
Her bosom heaved, while many a time she sighed :  
" Ah God ! why makest thou me but to starve ?  
My pride, resplendently as doth the rose,  
Into the light would give itself to carve  
Its hours into beauty." Verily,  
She sat as fair in her poor rags by the street  
As she could make herself ; the little boys,  
Perhaps her children, ran about her feet,  
And under her protection had their joys.  
The sweet protection she to them did give  
She should have had ; else not been made to live.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

### IN MEMORIAM

H. R.

1882

In Hermann's fate the loveliest fall; but thus  
Young Phaeton pressed toward the sun, to take  
His sky-ascending steeds, that, blessing us,  
White, proudly stamping, dazzling-maned, do break  
Light's path in cloudy struggle over all.  
Like fallen, from his hope completion fled,  
Like flowers that come too early, and do fall.  
In faith deceived, he sank, o'erturned and dead.  
So, Hermann, fairest promise of late time,  
Thy epitaph is written, which, though cold,  
Bears witness to the strength that every clime  
Gives to the company of heroes old.

O'er-confident, each met in pride, and bright,  
Earth's beggar wrath, rejecting beauty's right.

### THE SAME

1883

As Phaeton pressed toward the sun to take  
His sky-ascending steeds, that, blessing us,

## UNFINISHED VERSES

Drag forth the glorious light, where dawn doth break,  
To chase away night black and troublous,  
And fallen, then from hope completion fled,  
And noble trust walked broken-hearted, sad,  
And, in the youthful earth, faith was as dead,  
And high attempt in beauty's quest as mad,  
New Hampshire's music-making waves destroyed  
Hermann, the fairest promise of our time,  
Hermann, whom Nature taught what we enjoyed,  
Where waves break beachward with melodious chime.  
O'er-trustful each, each thought an o'ertold spite,  
Earth's storied wrath at fairest beauty's right.

## THE SAME

1885

As Phaeton pressed toward the sun, to take  
His sky-ascending steeds, that, blessing us,  
Lift up the glorious light, where dawn doth break,  
To chase away night black and troublous,  
So, now, the fairest figure of our time  
Lies drowned, Hermann hushed, his concourse, tolled,  
Tell that his strength was that which every clime  
Gives to the company of heroes old.  
He was a youth on whom the bended eyes



## UNFINISHED VERSES

Of all his City dwelt, each thought him first ;  
The sweetest-dispositioned boy, but wise,  
Composer, and Musician, in much versed.  
To tell his worth were like a fable — No,  
His flower died in bud, let this be so.

## FRAGMENTS

1884

So, Hermann, our love, thou art not dead ;  
Thy hope was for us all, and, that once told,  
Thou stayest our love, thou hast but gone ahead,  
Added to the company of heroes old.  
O Death, thy reign of night unsparing takes ;  
Thy hated rule our end like darkness makes.

1885

In helping us, from him help fled away,  
As from that other once his horses fled,  
So trust gave doubt and darkness to the day,  
So, in the youthful Earth, faith was as dead.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

### MENUETTO

1883

It cannot be, thou lovely maid, thy worth  
Can be surpassed by aught of land or sea,  
For they, of cloud-streaked, little-trusted Earth,  
Unequal, bend, in perfect truth, to thee.  
As wrestleth light, the Heaven-raging clouds  
To men's eyes darken even Summer's air,  
A devastating whirlwind meadows shrouds,  
Whose labours fall, a moment earlier fair.  
But thou, a form of Nature and of Mind,  
Mindful of Nature's lapses lov'st to be,  
So thy perfection, to th' imperfect kind,  
Shows like a diamond for the world to see.

Lo! he, who would this diamond bear away,  
Let him o'er rivals be, else, single stay.

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1883

The nineteenth century is a very dull time,  
And now, I think, most men do think it best  
To drink potations strong, sing ne'er a rhyme,

## UNFINISHED VERSES

But jest the night away until they rest.  
For, all we think of now is *phosphorus*,  
*Abiogenesis*; Apollo, what words!  
And oft I speak of *pachydermatous*,  
In view of herds, and slander worse the birds.  
The truth is I am sadly out of time,  
And should have lived six thousand years ago,  
And what the deuce to do to make a rhyme  
Is something I am sure I do not know,  
    Though, such an unpoetical Book as this  
    Would make, in poetry, *Abiogenesis*.

## MARRIAGE

1883

Thus, in the gentle time, the fairest maids,  
Whose honesty doth make their parents' pride,  
Turn in their moving youth to merits' aids,  
That strength united more may home provide,  
And when at marriage-altar they appear,  
The bride doth give herself and all she has,  
Yet never takes a step in doubting fear;  
She thinks of what she is, not what she was.  
And then, if fall grief's raindrops heavily,  
Her tender nature tempereth, these to stay;

## UNFINISHED VERSES

So ever house abideth home, and she  
Remaineth faithful to the uttermost day.  
He who not values such let him be gone ;  
Go he to where he will he'll be alone.

## TO SATURN

1883

O Saturn, when I see thy light afar,  
I think if so from thee that light doth play  
A whole world's beauty ; if't be so, then, star,  
I'll call within my heart thine innermost ray.  
I wonder if thy world so fair may stay  
To them that live in thee ; hath never bar  
Of world-corruption stood 'twixt fairest way  
And fouler path, or, if thee this doth mar,  
Is't better that we see thee far away ?  
Is't better thus than there to have our day ?  
O, who shall answer thus thy question bright,  
To whom thy answer shalt thou give to say ?  
Circling throughout thy starry path of night,  
Thy only answer to this question 's, " nay."

## UNFINISHED VERSES

### A DONKEY

1883

As when a starving donkey, finding naught,  
And shaking his wise ears doth look despair,  
And to the general world his views are fraught  
With naught of joy, which he propoundeth there,  
And then doth stand to meditate on all  
In thoughts most drear, to use as time doth pass,  
And when he speaks, as one who would appall,  
His keeper groans, and says, "There goes that Ass,"  
So, aye, that tedious ghost, Philosophy,  
Infects my mind with vain imaginings,  
Itself proclaiming an authority,  
Whilst it to thistles goes from better things,  
For it is worse to such a state to fall  
Than it can be to have no thoughts at all.

### ENVOY

1883

There is an island set deep in the ocean,  
Where Apollo, in music perpetual, dwells.  
The bass is the roar of the ocean,  
The treble the wind in the leaves.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

### SPRING

1884

The snow is gone, the brooks are free,  
O wind, I'd run a race with thee.  
Come, Phillis, to the brookside hie,  
To see the water murmur by.

. . . . .  
No more shall Winter vex us, he's forgot,  
Fled; while Apollo, in his secret spot,  
Resumes his gentle sway; the sighing winds  
Attune their delicate viols; he rescinds  
All shocking discords, and melodious tone  
Sets to the woodland;

### FALLEN TIMBER

1884

So like a tree, which fiercest Winter's gales  
Bring down to Earth, yet one root leave in soil,  
Whose leaf Spring brings to tell most mournful tales  
Of doubted strength, and sickness' sad despoil.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

### IN THE MOB

1886

The inferior standard : what a misery  
Assails, to lose the refuge of your thought,  
The walk abroad of veiled nonentity,  
The ghosted mind, of reason's self distraught !  
What wrestlings, strugglings, strivings, hard to win,  
Come forth where no one may the game remark,  
What bullying, blight, the mighty city's din,  
What carking souls of rabblement, strange and dark !

### AS THE CLOCK

1886

So is it with me as with the household clock,  
Who sits upon the wall and ticks the time,  
And in himself is thought a strange old lock,  
But trifles with the hour in measured rhyme.  
So here I sit, as I have leisure to,  
And let the world of revelry point at me  
By saying, " There he sits, that busy screw !"  
For all the while I make my rhymes agree.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

So here I sit while others fight with care,  
And, if I find myself and Time at ease,  
Why is it then that I should mark their stare?  
There is within myself what all can please.  
Who 'd ever change for stares? Enough to know  
That though they seem so fast I am not slow.

## THE OCEAN

1887

The Ocean : at last upon the still, still main,  
That glistening, unrevealed, links with the sky,  
Balm of the mind, soul's home, self-centred fane,  
Great floor for star-lit skies to ponder by !  
Infinite solitude, where no one sees  
A fraction of what goes unnoticed by,

## ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND

1890

When this frame shall wither — Ha, thou fencing orb,  
Whose level glory mocks our question, "Where?"  
Why followeth thy motion that leaves us bare  
Of light, which, in thy fall, thou 'lt now absorb?



## UNFINISHED VERSES

I turn, my thought doth turn, from thy broad face  
Unto myself, to find an answer there :  
When this shall wither, shall there naught repair  
Its cadence, fled day ne'er its span retrace?  
Within the stars I find an answer wrote,  
They are night's monitors when night doth come,  
What multiplieth ill doth ever coat  
Itself about us, as each night our home,  
But when summed ill and well their balance quote,  
The residuum of good shall be their sum.

## IN A BOY'S COPY-BOOK

1897

"I bring to you a vessel of ink,"  
The raven said, with artful wink ;  
The crow replied, and turned aside,  
"I do not live on water dyed."

They twitter and sing, the little birds,  
Although they fly on journeys long ;  
They preach a sermon without words :  
Life is made beautiful with song.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

The little birds sing in a row  
Chirrup, Chirrup, Chirrup.  
The hobby-horses rock and go,  
Stirrup, Stirrup, Stirrup.

## ON A PHOTOGRAPH

May 12, 1897

Into the darkened and the silent room  
Come hidden footsteps ; then a face appears,  
The Genius of the dusk ; his piercing eyes  
Read all thoughts, and prove all duties done.  
It is the Brownie !

## POETIZING

1897

It is a cursèd trouble to write ! Add on  
To try to write, for my Muse has her feet  
Apterous, or clothed with wings unmeet  
For wished assay. And why the lines to con,  
Forget a joy to gain a comment, don  
Ambition's dress, a pedestal, to beat  
My simpler brother ? Life is joy, but fleet,

## UNFINISHED VERSES

And why should toil inflict itself, though won?  
O that there were a peace without decay,  
Peace to last all, peace to stand finally,  
And that the ebb and tide of this great play  
Left us spectators! Here sloth's harsh decree  
Separates from Heaven. On, take the way,  
Seek ever the meed, peace after victory!

## SHAKSPERE

1897

Shakspere, I stand near thee; in fear and doubt  
Thou layedst thee in the grave, we say, unknown  
Content to rest, yet we, sweet spirit flown,  
Bow toward thee, amazed as thee thy verse gives out.  
A stage-manager's life, his arm was stout  
To hold it, but his heart, his works to own  
Aglow, was loveliest; none, none, O none  
Like him 'midst those who thereat stood about.  
Weary of verse, vexed with philosophy,  
He thought of Perdita and Miranda; "age  
Lost not his labour," if reward it be  
That we see. Young, ensnared in woman's cage,  
He broke through, an outlaw; returned then see  
The rose of thought, the gentle millennial sage.

## UNFINISHED VERSES

### MEADOW-ELEGY

(Paraphrase of Beethoven's Op. 59, No. 3, *Andante con moto quasi Allegretto*)

September, 1905

Here, where waving grass, with tufted head,  
Nods to the Sun, I mourn the dead Mozart.  
In such a place I turn the noisy mart  
Into a memory, and sigh the dead  
With every wave of wind, whose passing tread  
Presses the chosen stalks, and so fail heart  
Each in his turn, the leaders of our Art,  
Who seem for nothing to be sown and bred.  
Yet, for a time, I 'll sit and sing that bloom,  
That sang to gracious shapes this rough world's core,  
One ever missed, now laid in nameless tomb.  
Ah bitter, wringing pain, that Time walks o'er  
The heads of such as he, my model, whom  
No more my eyes shall see, no more, no more!



## **DISCONNECTED STANZAS**



## DISCONNECTED STANZAS

1897 et seq.

### PART I

#### I

In shady woodland scenery oft  
The heart inquisitive loves to stray,  
Measuring its steps to breezes soft,  
With chequered thoughts along the way.

#### II

With graceful mien as once the young  
Beethoven, Buddh, or Dante went,  
Each passer's care is off him flung,  
So rich the woods in that content.

#### III

As vast in forest the wood extends,  
How little seem my ends and aims !  
I am one that for naught contends ;  
A look my fretful motion shames.



## DISCONNECTED STANZAS

### IV

The falling leaf comes yellowing down,  
Like Lucifer against the sky ;  
Mixed are the thoughts that it has shown,  
Mixed as the leaves where it will lie.

### INTERLUDE

#### I

Humor is a saving grace ;  
Under melancholy boughs,  
Let a man himself arouse,  
And put on a better face !

#### II

None in kindness mistake ;  
Set Good Nature on the throne !  
He that has it not be shown,  
In a pool, his look of snake !

#### III

Out upon the hornèd elf,  
That was not conceived to joke !  
Let him stop self-love, or choke ;  
In sweet Nature see himself !

## DISCONNECTED STANZAS

### IV

From her throne Good Nature rise,  
Speak with grace to all the world !  
“ Learn my law ! My flag unfurled  
Should rule all, beneath all skies.”

## PART II

### I

So, dreaming on the forest floor,  
I step, with thoughts that fly and climb,  
Spanning the shafted maple hoar,  
Reckoning years in measureless time.

### II

Ambition's face is dullèd here ;  
The forest of itself explains,  
In crowded bole and sapling sere,  
The hideousness of jostling gains.

### III

As drops the leaf, so chances end —  
How little chance is mine to-day —  
The upper leaves their carol blend,  
Contain a sigh — go on to play.

## DISCONNECTED STANZAS

### IV

The falling leaf comes yellowing down,  
Like Lucifer against the sky ;  
Must are the thoughts that it has shown,  
Must as the leaves where it will lie.

### INTERLUDE

#### I

Humor is a saving grace ;  
Under melancholy boughs,  
Let a man himself arouse,  
And put on a better face !

#### II

Name is kindness mistake ;  
Set Good Nature on the throne !  
He that has it not be shown,  
Is a fool, his look of snake !

#### III

Out upon the horned elf,  
That was not conceived to joke !  
Let him stop self-love, or choke ;  
Let sweet Nature see himself !

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## DISCONNECTED STANZAS

### IV

What Nature made that bird and bough  
So pretty? Each the other shakes  
That each seems made for other; how  
Is 't Nature such of nothing makes?

### V

And yet, what is there in the wood  
That does not murmur "yesterday,"  
As if the spirit of the good  
Remained of trees that would not stay?

### VI

What thoughts of suns in splendor rolled,  
Revolved in the abyss of Time,  
To make the forest's recessed gold,  
Arise as thoughts to causes climb!

### VII

What dreams that fairies leave the moon,  
Among the hanging boughs to glide,  
With fairy taps that beat too soon,  
And merry crews that homeward ride!

## DISCONNECTED STANZAS

### VIII

Beneath the ponderous giant's bed  
There lay one we can scarcely see ;  
His mossy length marks where, ere sped  
A hundred years, he used to be.

### IX

The gnats above the Autumn stream  
Hover in sunlight, nothing know  
But that their law is thus ; their dream  
Is that law's stream must ever flow.

### X

O, he who would a proof survey  
Of that which must be more than he,  
In shadowy pool his image stay,  
Then let him say whence can it be.

### XI

The character that Man does have  
Comes from above ; from what above  
Less than a character, that gave  
The power to know, the strength to love ?

## DISCONNECTED STANZAS

### XII

The rest and beauty of the wood  
That, far within its outmost guard,  
Exist in stillness, with Man's good  
Entwine, and are not safely marred.

### XIII

By winding ways, past maples sheer  
And snaky beeches, still I go ;  
Each turn I see the new appear  
And leave what I have learned to know.

### XIV

The mushroom's shade, what tiring place  
For gentle Peaseblossom with his cap !  
The little elf upturns his face —  
A happy fall to whom such hap !

### XV

Cobweb is here, I 'm sure ; he is  
A brother of Puck's ; all day he leans  
Along a twig ; his business 't is  
With spiders' wants, whate'er he means.

## DISCONNECTED STANZAS

### XVI

And little Moth ; he flies all day  
As well as night ; he seeks the shade  
And hidden place, and knows to weigh  
Of what must fall and what must fade.

### XVII

Last, Mustard-seed, the tiniest he  
And mightiest of the fairies four ;  
He sets the seed of every tree  
And plant upon the forest floor.

FINIS

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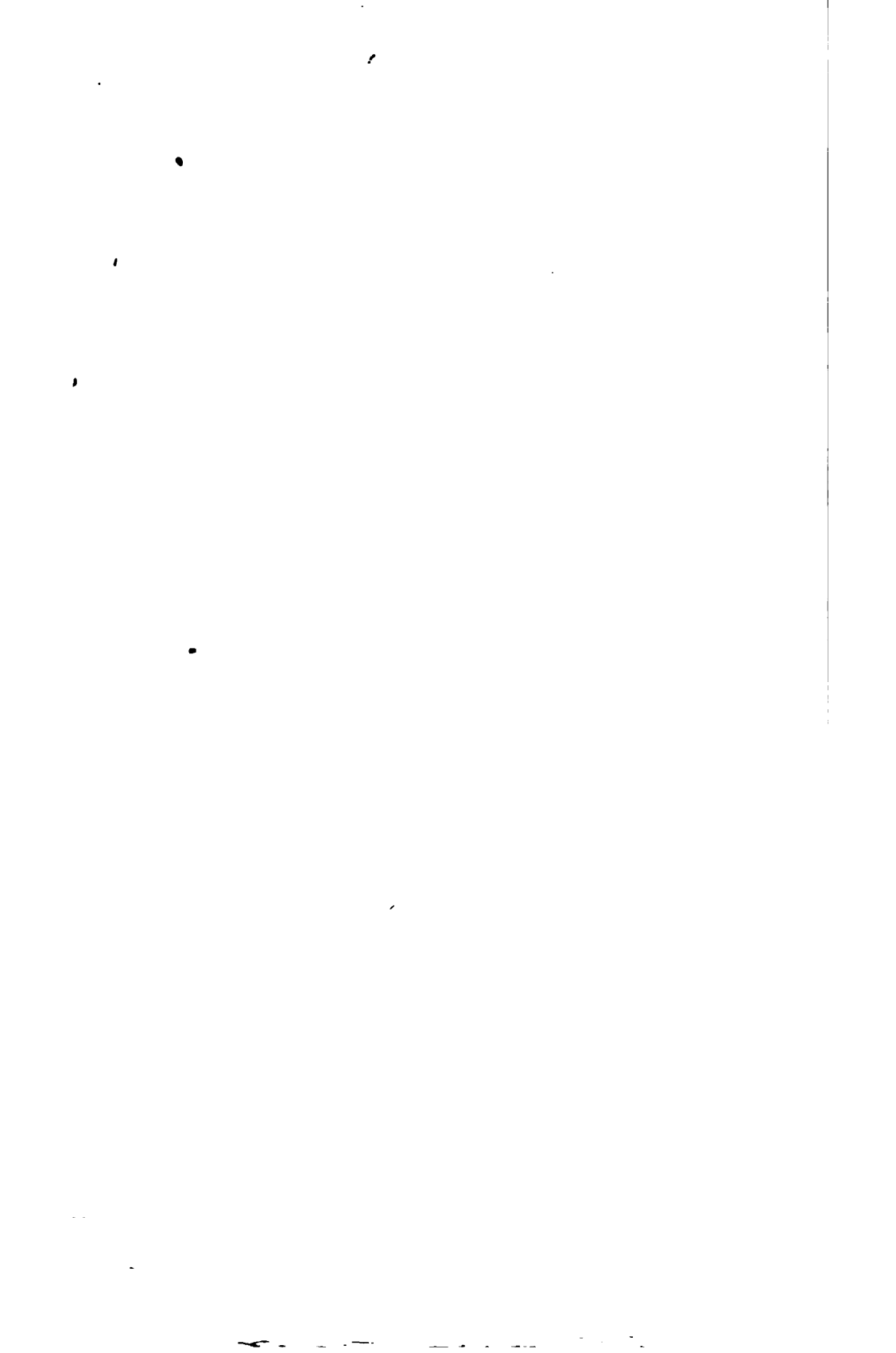












## *TWO SONNETS*

(Written during my wife's first illness, May 4-July 31, 1906)

J. R. STRONG

### I

#### THE UNHAPPY PARADISE

I stand alone, no God in sight,  
The worm corrodes and nothing stands ;  
With rift, that sears in hope's despite,  
And pitfalls, lie the sunlit lands.  
Contention rules ; the Ocean's sands  
In grating murmur tell their fight ;  
Let all be done that may with hands,  
At last war ends and rests in night.  
Attracting vision, sense-web spun,  
'Twixt Past and Future whirl its days,  
Best for its purpose, worse than none.  
Limbed like the deer, my speed betrays,  
Yet, transformed safe, I'd ne'er have done  
To thread its glades, to learn its ways.

May-July, 1906.







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## SONNET

(1907)

### AFTER

Ah, broken heart, repine not as thou wouldst,  
Lest out of all thy mind thy nature fail;  
Remember not the hours missed, the vale,  
Wherein deep sorrows lie, of what thou shouldst.  
For, as the clock tells minutes, and thou couldst  
Have watched them as thy pulse, so never sail,  
Nor row, nor woodland walk did thee avail,  
And then the lightning struck thee as thou stood'st  
As Peter did his inward dawn destroy,  
And then he went out and wept bitterly,  
So I hope for forgiveness in some while.  
There yet I trust, beholding her in joy,  
Amid God's angels throned, so fair to see,  
To ask for recognition and her smile.

New York, September 26, 1907.









JAN 29 1958

